**Anticipated Economic Impact of the First Collegiate Ice Hockey Game in Europe to be Played in Northern Ireland**

Historical Impact of Similar Events:
In 2010, a number of high profile international sporting events took place in Belfast supported by Belfast City Council, Invest NI and Tourism Ireland.

The events covered ice hockey, basketball, football, athletics and Gaelic sports. The most high profile event was the visit of the legendary Boston Bruins ice hockey team at the beginning of October. One of the founding members of the National Hockey League, the Bruins played their first ever game outside North America in Belfast, where they took on a special Belfast Giants Selects team - made up of an all-star selection of the best of the UK Elite League players - in a pre-season exhibition at the Odyssey Arena on 2 October. Two months earlier, at the same venue, international basketball was the focus of attention.

The Belfast International Basketball Classic, at the Odyssey on 6 and 7 August, saw one of the US collegiate circuit's top teams, faced off against the top Australian NBL side Melbourne Tigers in a two-day competition that also featured the England and Scotland national teams.

Over the last ten years, Belfast's reputation for hosting major events has expanded greatly. These major events, including sporting events, the Tall Ships, World Irish Dancing Championships, the World Amateur Boxing Championships, the U19 European football championships, the Special Olympics Ireland games, and the U19 Rugby World Cup, have had an estimated economic impact of £16 million to the city.

Events such as the International Basketball Classic and the visit of the Boston Bruins add to the diversity and exclusiveness of events hosted by Northern Ireland, providing them with some niche markets. Hosting the first collegiate hockey game to be played in Europe will only add to the caliber of events that are making Northern Ireland and Belfast in particular, a standout venue for sporting events.

Impact of Ice Hockey
Belfast and ice hockey have a special relationship. In a city and society divided, both physically and philosophically, along sectarian lines it was important to find a way to bring these two groups together in the post-conflict era.

In the decades long effort to bridge the divide in Northern Ireland, popular sport has often been cited as a vehicle for cross-community reconciliation and growth. Ice Hockey, previously known as a participatory and spectator sport in Northern Ireland, was introduced in the 1990s with the visionary hope that it might provide such a cross-community activity. The Belfast Giants were thus born in 2000. The Giants play at the Odyssey Arena in Belfast against teams from Scotland and England. The UMass Lowell/Northeastern game would also be played at the Odyssey Arena.

This event will be more than just a hockey game. UMass Lowell and Northeastern will each have individually tailored programs arranged, including visits to meet local school children, community relation building activities, sports clinics and lectures and symposia. It is hoped that these events, combined with Northeastern's Center for Sport in Society and the Second Annual US/Ireland Emerging Technologies Conference will have a greater impact on Northern Ireland than a hockey game alone would have.

In the wake of the hugely successful Bruins game, this event would help to cement the image of a Northern Ireland as a vibrant region and one that stands out from its UK competition when it comes to hosting ice hockey, particularly as the game will be televised in the US.

Why we want to do this

In 2009, the University of Massachusetts Lowell created a Center for Irish Partnerships, "to work with Irish partners to create a dynamic model for Cross-Atlantic collaboration that will promote and advance UMass Lowell's goals to enhance the student experience by providing a global perspective to teaching and research, while contributing to Irish interests through exchange and service."

Since its inception, the Center has worked to find ways to enhance the academic experience for UMass Lowell's students and faculty by hosting conferences, signing frameworks for institutional collaboration with Irish universities and providing opportunities for student and faculty exchanges.

Economic Impact of Event for the City of Belfast

When determining the impact that this proposed hockey game can have on Belfast, and Northern Ireland as a whole, we need to consider it in relation to the other events that are scheduled to coincide with the game.

The hockey game will be just one piece of an exciting line up of events to take place in Northern Ireland during October 8 – 10, 2011. Other activities include the Second Annual US/Ireland Emerging Technologies Conference, a golf tournament, sports symposia, alumni outings and community building activities. A breakdown of each of these events and their anticipated economic impact follows.

Ice Hockey Game

The goal is for the River Hawks to play Northeastern University in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on Saturday, October 8, 2011. This would be an official regular-season Hockey East game and would impact Hockey East standings.

The University of Massachusetts Lowell has competed in intercollegiate men's Ice Hockey since 1972 and in NCAA Division I (the highest level in the U.S.) since 1982.

The River Hawks play in Hockey East, considered by most to be the finest college hockey conference in the nation.

UMass Lowell and Northeastern have developed a healthy rivalry over the years, having most recently competed in the 2009 Hockey East Tournament semi-final game at Boston's TD Bank Garden. The River Hawks came back from a 3-1 deficit to win 4-3 in overtime.

Economic Impact Overview:

- Hotel accommodations in Belfast for upwards of 80 hockey players and coaching staff
- Flights to Belfast for upwards of 80 hockey players and coaching staff
- Televised game
- Marketing - Television/radio promotion of Northern Ireland on local stations in US
- Travel to Belfast of UK elite league supporters and fans, alumni, and sponsors of US teams
- Local business spinoff (restaurants, coach service, museums and tourist attractions, public transportation, shopping, etc.)
- Community engagement (local school trips)
- US/Northern Ireland investment in ice hockey (support for junior giants, Northern Ireland Ice Hockey Association)
- Anticipated 4,500 attendees to Odyssey Arena for game.

Second Annual US/Ireland Emerging Technologies Conference

In October 2009, UMass Lowell hosted the first annual US/Ireland Emerging Technologies Conference at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center, engaging faculty and researchers from Queen's University, Dublin City University, UMass Lowell and leaders in industry. This international event featured experts from the three universities presenting and taking part in panel discussions on new research in biopharmaceuticals, medical devices, nanotechnology and more. Representatives of companies leading the way in those fields will spoke about how new technologies are being used in real-world manufacturing and product development.

Nearly 200 people participated in the conference, with about 100 present for each of the four sessions. Scientific poster sessions of new research were held simultaneously. Representatives of leading companies exhibited products and services, making the link to how new technologies are being used in real-world manufacturing and product development. Corporate sponsors of the event were Millipore Corp., Nypro Healthcare, PTC and Tesco Associates.

UMass Lowell is currently working with partners at Dublin City University and Queen's University Belfast to host the second US/Ireland Emerging Technologies conference in Ireland in October 2011. The conference will take place one day in Dublin and one day in

Belfast and will highlight the industry and emerging technologies of the Dublin-Belfast corridor.

It is anticipated that this conference will attract a similar, if not larger, crowd than the one held in Massachusetts last year. The conference alone will draw around 200 people from Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the United States. Corporate sponsors will send representative to attend the conference and each university will have upwards of 6 presenters taking part.

Economic Impact Overview:

- Hotel accommodations in Belfast for presenters and corporate attendees from the United States and Ireland
- Flights to Belfast for United States presenters and corporate attendees
- Cross-border train and bus ridership for attendees from Ireland and those participating in the Dublin based events
- Local restaurants
- Museums and tourist attractions
- Public Transportation/taxis
- Shopping
- Business investment

Alumni Related Activities

As part of the draw for fans and alumni to attend the collegiate hockey game in Northern Ireland we will be working on several package options to build a weekend long series of events around the game. This will include a golf tournament, potentially in collaboration with the golf teams of UMass Lowell, Queen's University and Ulster University, along with alumni from UMass Lowell. Outings to various tourist attractions in Northern Ireland including; the Giant's Causeway, Dunluce Castle, Bushmills Distillery, the Ulster-American Folk Park and Belfast City Tours.

Ireland, Northern Ireland and the United State of America have always had a strong relationship. Nearly 40 million Americans are proud to call themselves Irish-Americans and far more will come together to honor this unique heritage. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts nearly one quarter of our citizens are of Irish heritage. This important connection with Irish heritage will make the weekend-long series of events happening in Northern Ireland in October 2011 very appealing for alumni and friends of UMass Lowell and Northeastern University.

Economic Impact Overview:

- Hotel accommodations in Belfast for alumni, friends and sponsors attending the hockey game and UMass Lowell activities.
- Flights to Belfast for alumni, friends and sponsors attending the hockey game and UMass Lowell activities.
- Local business spinoff (restaurants, public transportation, shopping, etc.)

- Tourism impact (coach service, museums, monuments, local attractions)
- Golf (participants in the UMass Lowell/Northeastern Alumni Golf Tournament)

Conclusion

The outlined weekend of activities centered around the event of the first collegiate hockey game to be played in Europe offers the potential for projecting positive images of Northern Ireland internationally through media coverage of the event and has the potential to have a very positive economic impact due to the number of events that will coincide with the hockey game. The impact of a major sporting event and a trilateral collaborative conference will contribute greatly to the tourism industry and local economy. The relationships that are currently being developed between UMass Lowell, Northeastern, Queen's University, Ulster University and Dublin City University, have the potential to increase cross-Atlantic business, education and industry links as well as cross-border collaboration.

# Hockey in Northern Ireland – Random Thoughts

**Connections to Pursue:**
(see attached contact information)

**Cost Estimate:**
Robert Fitzgerald requested a financial pro former for the trip to Belfast. Expenses to include in the estimate:

- Airfare for travel party
- Accommodations (4 nights, Wednesday – Sunday)?
- Meals
- Transportation
- Entertainment/excursions
- Community-based activities
- Marketing/promotion/giveaway items
- Costs associated with television coverage (must decide if we will fly TV production crew to Belfast or if we will go with local production that would be streamed back – should get a sense from Robert about what the most attractive television package would be from a Tourism Ireland standpoint)
- Excess/oversize baggage fees (possibly get Aer Lingus, Continental or American Airlines to be a contributing sponsor to cut/eliminate these charges)
- Costs for game officials to travel

**Possible Benefits for Belfast:**

1. Alumni, friends and sponsors travel deals (need estimated numbers)
2. Possible TV and radio coverage in US to promote Ireland
3. Promotion of benefit of sports to Belfast business and society in general
4. Number of spectators at game
5. Local business spinoff (golf, restaurants, hotels, etc.)
6. Community engagement (number of children impacted, impact on community etc.)
7. Queen's and University of Ulster campus engagement
    a. Friendly Rivalry and Annual Cup event – Need a name: Belfast Challenge Cup, Annual Belfast University Cup, US/Belfast Challenge Cup

**Marketing/Promotions**

1. Activities to encourage attendance
    a. Connect with Belfast Giants
        - Giants autograph and meet the players night?
        - Giants Bobblehead giveaway (mascot of best known player)
        - Mascot appearances by UML-NU-Giants?
    b. Between period shooting competition at Giants goaltender?
    c. Chuck-a-Puck to raise money for local charity?
2. Include hockey game in Belfast season ticket package
3. Is there a significant sports figure in Belfast that would serve as a co-chair of hockey event?
4. Media coverage
5. Website presence at Ulster/Queens/Odyssey Arena-Others?
6. General promotional activity (leave to Todd)

7. Need to make sure we have someone working on each marketing component-campus marketing at Queens & Ulster/ general community/primary schools

**Possible Components of Community Engagement:**

1. Sport and Society Workshop and Luncheon
    a. NU should take the lead on this
2. Youth Clinics – hockey and/or other sports – NU and UMass Lowell to determine most beneficial sports to include in this piece
3. School visits by NU & UML student-athletes- could distribute promotional item to promote game - free child ticket with every adult ticket purchased.
4. Sportsmanship poster competition in primary schools
5. Belfast sports figures as co-chairs for sport and society initiative?
6. Sports and Society Awards – certificates for schools based on academic and sports excellence? Criteria to be determined by SportsNI or schools
7. Community service activity performed by UMass Lowell and Northeastern hockey teams –
8. Can we involve local sports clubs – Rugby Football Clubs, GAA clubs, Football Supporters Clubs at Odyssey?
9. Auction/Raffle at game – sports memorabilia, Jerseys etc.
10. Peace Line Skate Off
11. Event Press Conference in Belfast?

**Possible Schedule:**

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| Tuesday, October 4, 2011 | Hockey teams fly to Belfast |
| Wednesday, October 5, 2011 | Arrive in Belfast, free day, adjust to time change |
| Thursday, October 6, 2011 | Peace Line Skate/Press conference |
| Friday, October 7, 2011 | Sport in Society Segment<br>School visits by players<br>Dinner with co-chairs of the initiative and local leaders in community engagement and sports |
| Saturday, October 8, 2011 | Morning Clinic?<br>VIP Pre-Game Reception<br>Game |
| Sunday, October 9, 2011 | Tours/Golf Outing |
| Monday, October 10, 2011 | Return To US |